

Five Whys

Time Needed:	5 to 15 minutes
Group Size:	Any
Objectives:	Building reframing, caring and connecting skills
Materials:	A pencil and paper for each student
Links/Resources	From: <i>Mindful Games Activity Cards</i> by Susan Kaiser Greenland with Annaka Harris

Activity Description

This activity can be done remotely by either facilitating a discussion over a live video call with students and/or assigning it for homework.

In this activity, students will “ask why” five times to help them understand a problem and its solution.

Leading the Activity

Ask the students to think of a complicated situation they’ve dealt with in the past. Have them examine their role in the situation, and ask them to write it down in one or two sentences. After they’ve completed this, have students turn their response into a *why* question. For example, if their answer is *My role was to solve a problem*, they’ll ask, *Why was I responsible for solving the problem?* Students will then answer the question they posed. *Guide the students in continuing to ask and answer why questions for as long as they find the questions helpful, but no fewer than five times.*

You can then reframe the prompt to inquire about other people’s roles and the system’s role in the situation.

Questions for Reflection

- What was it like to reflect on a complicated situation?
- After asking, the “five whys” did your perspective change? Why or why not?
- What might be the benefit of examining a complicated situation in this way?